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CIA 1.01 Bush, Geo.
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CIA chief cites danger in congressional leaks

By Douglas Y. Peters

CIA Director George W. Bush yesterday blamed congressional committees with CIA oversight privileges for the "unprecedented number of leaks in the last year."

Bush told the City Club Forum, "Leaks can hurt American intelligence activities far into the future. The United States must have an intelligence agency second to none."

He said a consolidation of congressional investigations would minimize leaks and the CIA is willing to cooperate with Congress in the future.

"I personally appeared 28 times before congressional committees since becoming director. The CIA has disclosed its budget in minute detail to several congressional committees."

Bush is opposed to the publication of any part of the CIA budget because "subsequent comparisons of the total figure changes" could reveal new intelligence activities.

Bush said covert activities, which formerly accounted for about 50% of the CIA budget, have been reduced to 2%.

"I believe no president should be denied covert capabilities," Bush said.

Bush conceded the CIA has used news correspondents as agents in the past, but said, "as soon as possible" existing relationships with journalists will be ended and no more newsmen would be employed as agents.

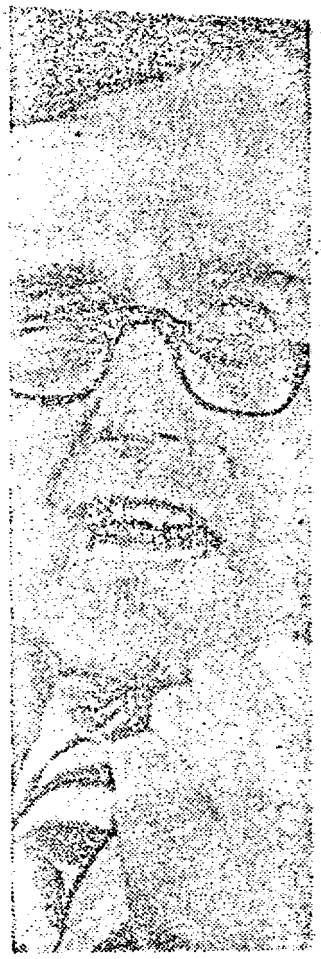
However, Bush defended the practice of accepting information from news correspondents "who voluntarily contact the agency for the purpose of exchanging information with no expectation of monetary gain."

Declining to reveal the names of any journalists who have worked for the CIA, Bush said, "I hope that members of a profession willing to go to jail rather than reveal their sources will understand this."

Despite recent attacks on the CIA, Bush said morale is high and enrollment has increased. He said he believes time will restore the public's confidence in the CIA.

He admonished the audience not to believe all disclosures about CIA activities merely because they are printed.

"We have been accused," he said, "of stealing relics from Noah's Ark."



Associated Press

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